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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

April 24, 2001

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: IB Docket No. 99-81 (2 GHz MMS Service Rules)

Dear Chairman Powell:

Rural Americans throughout the country, including many of our constituents, are still awaiting the introduction of broadband services. The Commission, recognizing this problem, has allocated spectrum in the 2 GHz band for Mobile Satellite Service ("MSS") and is currently working towards issuing licenses to the first set of applicants. The successful operation of MSS systems will bring to unserved and underserved areas, the same advanced communications capabilities available to urban users and will enhance the capabilities of public safety and military personnel.

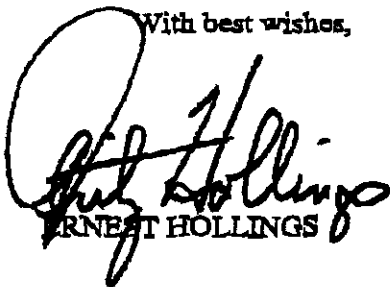
It has come to our attention that the Commission has been asked to authorize ancillary terrestrial use as a complement to 2 GHz MSS. It is our understanding that it may be necessary to provide 2 GHz MSS operators with the flexibility to engage in ancillary terrestrial service in order to ensure the financial viability and the efficient use of 2 GHz spectrum by MSS operators - a concept the Commission has endorsed previously with respect to other satellite service. Two GHz MSS operators will not be able to attract the billions of dollars in financial capital necessary to build and launch their systems without the ability to maximize their spectrum efficiency through an ancillary terrestrial component. Therefore, ancillary terrestrial service will enhance the ability of MSS operators to serve customers by improving the economics of MSS. This proposal does not require allocation of additional spectrum or sharing among different licensees. Additionally, terrestrial service would be allowed only after commercial operation of the satellite service and in a manner consistent with prior Commission decisions on combined use systems.

MSS systems have the unique ability to accomplish a host of public policy goals. If permitted to provide ancillary terrestrial service, 2 GHz MSS operators will be able to provide ubiquitous global connectivity. Since millions of Americans who live in rural areas currently have no mobile voice or data service, an MSS network will be their best, if not their only choice for fast digital connections. In addition, military, maritime, recreational, and public safety users

will benefit from MSS coverage of rural areas. In the case of a natural disaster or other crisis, MSS may provide the only communications link for military, maritime, and public safety personnel, and recreational users.

If the 2 GHz MSS service is to succeed, the Commission must decide the issue as quickly as possible, because applicants cannot begin in earnest to raise the enormous sums necessary to design, build, and deploy their systems when they do not yet have licenses and key aspects of the service rules remain under reconsideration. Further delay may be tantamount to denial. Therefore, we urge you to move as quickly as possible to decide the request to add an ancillary terrestrial component to 2 GHz MSS service.

With best wishes,


ERNEST HOLLINGS

Sincerely,


TED STEVENS


JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER IV


BYRON L. DORGAN



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON
May 17, 2001

FB DKt. 01-185

The Honorable Ernest F. Hollings
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce
United States Senate
558 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hollings:

Thank you for your letter concerning a proposal recently made to the Commission to authorize terrestrial use of Mobile Satellite Service ("MSS") spectrum in the 2 GHz band. I am committed to policies promoting the provision of broadband communications services to rural, unserved and underserved areas of the country. The Commission recognizes the potential of MSS systems to achieve this goal.

In March 2001, the Commission received two proposals from MSS operators to reuse assigned MSS frequencies with terrestrial base stations to provide a terrestrial component to their networks. The proposals present a number of options for implementation under existing spectrum allocations and service rules. The proposals also challenge the Commission to be innovative reconciling different regulatory regimes for satellite and wireless services. The Commission's staff soon will provide recommendations on how to proceed in considering these proposals. We have placed your letter in the public record of this proceeding.

Thank you for sharing your views on this matter. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further.

Sincerely,

Michael K. Powell
Chairman



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON
May 9, 2001

IB DK+ 01-185

The Honorable Ted Stevens
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Stevens:

Thank you for your letter concerning a proposal recently made to the Commission to authorize terrestrial use of Mobile Satellite Service ("MSS") spectrum in the 2 GHz band. I am committed to policies promoting the provision of broadband communications services to rural, unserved and underserved areas of the country. The Commission recognizes the potential of MSS systems to achieve this goal.

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Thank you for sharing your views on this matter. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further.

Sincerely,

Michael K. Powell
Chairman



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON
May 17, 2001

IB DK+ 01-185

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller, IV
United States Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Rockefeller:

Thank you for your letter concerning a proposal recently made to the Commission to authorize terrestrial use of Mobile Satellite Service ("MSS") spectrum in the 2 GHz band. I am committed to policies promoting the provision of broadband communications services to rural, unserved and underserved areas of the country. The Commission recognizes the potential of MSS systems to achieve this goal.

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Thank you for sharing your views on this matter. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further.

Sincerely,

Michael K. Powell
Chairman



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON
May 17, 2001

IB DKT. 01-183

The Honorable Byron L. Dorgan
United States Senate
713 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Dorgan:

Thank you for your letter concerning a proposal recently made to the Commission to authorize terrestrial use of Mobile Satellite Service ("MSS") spectrum in the 2 GHz band. I am committed to policies promoting the provision of broadband communications services to rural, unserved and underserved areas of the country. The Commission recognizes the potential of MSS systems to achieve this goal.

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Thank you for sharing your views on this matter. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further.

Sincerely,

Michael K. Powell
Chairman